

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



FACULTY ARTISTS SERIES

PROGRAM II

Soloists: Melvin Berman; William Aide; Vladimir Orloff
Anton Kuerti; Patricia Parr; Jane Coop

VICTOR FELDBRILL, conductor

WALTER HALL

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1979

8 P.M.

This concert will be broadcast by CBC at the following times:
Mostly Music, CBC Stereo, 94.1 FM, 11.35 am - 1 pm; and CBC
Radio 740 AM, 10.35 pm - 12 midnight on FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1979.

PROGRAM

Although the works on today's program are all designated by the term concerto, the diversity of musical styles presented is sufficient to indicate to the listener the elasticity of the term concerto as applied to a formal structure. In fact, concerto is best understood as a compositional principle rather than a form. Even so the principle differs according to whether one traces the origin of the word to the Latin verb consero - to join or bind together, or concerto - to dispute, contend or skirmish.

It appears that the word was originally used in the former sense but by the 17th century the technique of polychoral writing influenced composers to write instrumental compositions in which the element of contrast was achieved through a purposeful grouping of instruments. The subsequent history of the concerto, therefore, relied on the principle of opposition or rivalry between musical forces.

This program is composed of concerti written during the 18th century. This was a century which witnessed the style of the high baroque, the reaction of the pre-classic composers and the eventual development of the mature classical style. Accordingly, the listener today is afforded the opportunity of hearing the various ways in which the concerto principle was applied in fashioning the concerto throughout the century.

Concerto in G minor (No. III)

G. F. Handel

Grave

Allegro

Sarabande (Largo)

Allegro

The first solo concerti were written by Italian composers toward the end of the 17th century. This form of composition was quickly adopted by German musicians and soon developed into one of the most popular classes of instrumental music. Although Handel's output of concerti is relatively small, his works in this form, nevertheless, typify the concerto of the German high baroque. Comprising four movements, his Concerto No. 3 in G minor for oboe reflects the origins of the form in the instrumental dance suite.

The opening Grave is in the style of a French Overture and the

following Allegro has passages which are reminiscent of the trio sonata texture in the pairing of oboe and violin above a chordal accompaniment. The Sarabande is a movement of expressive lyricism emphasizing the principle of co-operation rather than contrast, and the final Allegro is constructed on the basis of a loosely defined solo-tutti relationship.

The work has been dated from 1703, and is thus among Handel's earliest works in the genre. "I used to write like the devil in those days," said Handel of his youth, "but chiefly for the hautbois". Clearly this was a favoured instrument.

Melvin Berman, Oboe

Concerto in A major, K. 414

W. A. Mozart

Allegro

Andante

Allegretto

This concerto represents the mature classical concept of the concerto as a dramatic form in which the individual stands in opposition to the mass. Charles Rosen observes that "the most important fact about concerto form is that the audience waits for the soloist to enter and when he stops playing they wait for him to begin again". The soloist, therefore, is like the hero in an opera and the concerto reflects human drama in absolute music.

Mozart wrote this concerto, the second of a group of three, in 1782. Having arrived in Vienna the previous year, one can imagine him making preliminary investigations into the current Viennese musical taste. Speaking of these three concerti he writes that "there are passages here and there from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction, but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why". Clearly the problem of writing music for the public while remaining true to his artistic standards was one of Mozart's chief concerns.

William Aide, piano

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Concerto in B^b major, (Grützmacher Edition)

L. Boccherini

Allegro Moderato

Adagio non troppo

Rondo - Allegro

Boccherini's B^b concerto has long been a favourite of cellists as a work which offers material for the display of technical brilliance as well as expressive interpretation. Boccherini was a virtuoso performer on the violoncello and his intimate knowledge of the scope and potentiality of the instrument is in evidence throughout the work.

In 1770 Boccherini was appointed violoncellist and composer at the court of the Infante Don Luis in Madrid, following a period of travel and study. Although the work is undated it is safe to assume that it was part of his repertory as a travelling virtuoso. His style of writing is typically Italian in character reflecting a bel canto influence in the lyrical Adagio. Furthermore, it reflects the galant musical taste of his day.

Today's performance makes use of the edition by Friedrich Grützmacher, published in 1895. Although it is not faithful to the original version, it has been sanctioned by time and indeed it is this version which has kept Boccherini in the cellists' repertoire.

Vladimir Orloff, violoncello

Concerto in C major for Three Pianos, BWV 1064

J. S. Bach

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

This work for three claviers and strings reminds one once again that the original concerto principle was one of co-operation. The soloists are, in fact, part of the orchestra and play throughout the work. Contrast, however, is achieved by having the ripieno (full orchestra) stop playing while the soloists continue. The formal structure, therefore, is based on a succession of ripieno and solo sections. The mature classical concept of the concerto as a dramatic form stressing the rivalry between soloist and orchestra is here contradicted by the baroque concept of contrasting bodies of instruments which sound in co-operation.

Speaking of this work, Albert Schweitzer says that "the tonal and rhythmical effects that Bach has achieved with three claviers are indescribable. At every hearing of these works we stand amazed before the mystery of so incredible a power of invention and combination".

Anton Kuerti, Patricia Parr, Jane Coop, pianos

Notes by John Alden French